FD-302 (Rev. 4-15-64)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 4/13/68

Mr. SOLOMON JONES, JR., 374 Vance Avenue, Memphis, who is employed as a funeral director for R. S. Lewis and Sons at the same address was interviewed at the Lorraine Motel, 406 Mulberry, Memphis.

Mr. JONES advised that he had been serving as chauffeur for Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., on Dr. KING's last trip to Memphis. He believed that he had started driving for Dr. KING on April 1, 1968. He stated that Reverend JAMES LAWSON of Memphis had requested him to drive Dr. KING while he was in Memphis.

On Wednesday night, April 3, 1968, Dr. KING spoke at the Mason Temple in Memphis and after the speech returned to the Lorraine Motel, 406 Mulberry, Memphis. Dr. KING told him to report back to the Lorraine Motel on Thursday morning, April 4, 1968, at 8:30 a.m., as Dr. KING was due to go to court in Memphis in regard to a restraining order.

Mr. JONES stated that on Thursday morning, April 4, 1968, he returned to the Lorraine Motel at about 8:30 a.m., which motel is located at 406 Mulberry. He stated this motel is located on the east side of Mulberry Street and is bordered on the north by Huling Avenue and on the south by East Butler.

He advised that he parked the car, which was used to drive Dr. KING and which car was a 1967 Cadillac and belonged to the R. S. Lewis and Sons Funeral Home, in the parking area of the Lorraine Motel. He parked this car in front of Room 207 which is on the ground level of the Lorraine Motel. The car was headed into the motel area which would have been in an easterly direction.

A short time after he arrived Reverend ANDREW YOUNG, an associate of Dr. KING, contacted JONES and stated that Dr. KING was not going to go to court on the morning of April 4, 1968, and YOUNG was going to go to court. Reverend YOUNG informed JONES that he was to remain at the motel as Dr. KING was to later that day address the sanitation workers.

On 4/12/68 at Memphis, Tennessee File # ME 44-1987-Sub D-76

by SA EUGENE G. DOUGLASS/raj Date dictated 4/13/68

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

JONES advised that he remained at the Lorraine Motel and ate his lunch at the motel. At about 3:00 p.m., April 4, 1968, Reverend BILLY KIZER (phonetic), a minister in Memphis, informed JONES that Dr. KING and other members of his staff were going to have dinner at Reverend KIZER's home at about 5:00 p.m., April 4, 1968.

Mr. JONES stated that Dr. KING did not leave the motel area the entire day of April 4, 1968, and JONES stated that he stayed in this area the entire day.

He advised that Dr. KING and his group did not leave the motel at 5:00 p.m., as had been originally mentioned to him by Reverend KIZER. At approximately 6:00 p.m., April 4, 1968, JONES noticed Dr. KING come out of a room on the balcony level of the Lorraine Motel which room was north of Room 306 where Dr. KING was residing. Dr. KING proceeded to Room 306 and as he was about to enter the room Dr. KING told JONES to start the car as they were preparing to go to dinner. JONES stated he started the car and Dr. KING went into Room 306 where he was staying with Reverend ABERNATHY.

Dr. KING came out of Room 306 a short time later and was standing on the balcony area in front of Room 306. At this time Dr. KING was fully dressed. Dr. KING was looking from the balcony level down to JONES who was standing beside the car on the ground level. JONES advised the car was still parked in front of Room 207. Dr. KING was talking to JONES about the weather and JONES stated he told Dr. KING he should put on a topcoat as it was cool outside. He stated that he was looking up at Dr. KING during this conversation and Dr. KING was facing west and that he, JONES, was facing east. Dr. KING acknowledged JONES concerning obtaining his topcoat.

JONES stated while he was still looking at Dr. KING he heard a sound which he thought was a fire cracker. Dr. KING fell to the floor of the walkway in front of Room 306. At this point JONES could see blood coming from Dr. KING, and realized the sound was actually a shot rather than a fire cracker.

JONES stated that he started screaming and calling for help and repeatedly called several times "Dr. KING's been shot."

He advised that at the time of the shooting that JESSE JACKSON, a staff member of Dr. KING, was standing at Room 305. He also recalled that Dr. KING's lawyer by the name of ESKRIDGE of Chicago, Illinois, was standing near JONES on the ground level.

After seeing Dr. KING bleeding and realizing that he was shot, JONES stated that he and ESKRIDGE did not run to the side of Dr. KING as others were coming to Dr. KING's aid. However, he and ESKRIDGE turned west since that was the direction in which the shot had originated, and went toward Mulberry Street which street is located on the front portion of the motel. They ran about 50 feet and stopped opposite the office of the motel. JONES stated he and the lawyer both then looked around and saw nothing. JONES stated he ran about another ten feet west and stopped at the edge of the sidewalk in front of the motel and stood beside a brick wall, He stated ESKRIDGE also ran up to same area opposite him. He advised when he reached this point he looked opposite the point where he was standing which was also the driveway area. He looked opposite the driveway area toward the west side of Mulberry Street. This area has a large retaining wall. Immediately above the retaining wall is a grassy area with some small shrubs and bushes. This area is behind some buildings facing South Main Street. He got a quick glimpse of a person with his back toward Mulberry Street.

He estimated the person he glimpsed would have been approximately 60 feet from where he was standing. He pointed out it was dusk dark and he merely got a quick glimpse of someone in that area. He stated that it was the back of this individual and he could not tell whether the person was Negro or white. This person was moving rather fast and he recalls that he believed he was wearing some sort of light colored jacket with some sort of a hood or parka. He stated this person appeared to him to be about 5'11" or a little taller. He did not see him carrying anything in his hand and did not notice anything concerning his dress below his waist.

He said he could not tell anything further about this individual and it could have been an officer, but he could not furnish any further details concerning this individual.

He related that he did not look to his left or south on Mulberry Street. After taking a quick glimpse he immediately ran back to the motel area where Dr. KING was located. He ran up the middle stairway of the motel which stairway was opposite Room 308. As he was running up the stairway he noticed a red ambulance had arrived and he believed this ambulance was a Memphis Fire Department ambulance.

At this point he stated he was in such a state of shock that someone put him in Room 308 and he had to lie down for a moment. While they were placing Dr. KING into the ambulance, LEE BERNARD, an aide of Dr. KING, came into Room 308 and told him to calm down and for him to drive the car and follow Dr. KING's ambulance. JONES stated he drove the car which had been used for Dr. KING and followed the ambulance to the hospital. In the car with him was Reverend ANDREW YOUNG and LEE BERNARD.